

Feeding

The park's marshes produce enough insects and invertebrates to sustain a diverse bird community. Waders such as the Great Blue Heron and Yellow-crowned Night-Heron stalk prey in the marshy guts while the Spotted Sandpiper feeds from the muddy creek bank. The Virginia Rail is not common, but it forages here during migration. More often heard than seen, the Clapper Rail is a year-round inhabitant of the marsh where it searches for mussels and fiddler crabs.

The forests provide many seeds, berries, and insects. In the summer, birds such as the abundant Red-eyed Vireo glean insects from the foliage of mature hardwoods. Others such as the White-breasted Nuthatch prefer searching for prey beneath tree trunk bark. Berries of the American Holly, Red Cedar, and Greenbrier are particularly important to migrating thrushes in the fall. Trumpet vine provides nectar for the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

Breeding

During the breeding season, the forest resounds with the territorial songs of birds from the tropics such as warblers, vireos, and tanagers. Each paired male sings a warning to others of its species to keep away. Its mate is probably brooding on their nest nearby. Both species of tanager can be heard singing high in the white oak canopy.

Several warblers breed at New Quarter Park including Northern Parula, and Hooded, Yellow-throated, and Kentucky Warblers. Common Yellowthroats find the marshes particularly accommodating for nesting and raising young.

Quite unique are the small Seaside Sparrows which breed along Queen's Creek, perhaps one of the western-most locations for these birds in the region.

Early in the breeding season, male American Woodcocks perform their high-spiraling courtship display at dusk and dawn. Listen for their high-pitched whistles as they dive.

Migration

The forests and marshes at New Quarter are never more active than during migration. All seven eastern thrushes and more than 20 warbler species pass through. It is not uncommon to encounter more than 70 species in a morning of casual birding.

Many of these forest birds are neotropical migrants – birds arriving from or going to Central and South America and the Caribbean islands. Many rest and refuel in the New Quarter Park woods before moving on. Some species, such as the Red-eyed Vireo, Ovenbird, and Wood Thrush, remain to breed. For those species only passing through, the greatest numbers stop at New Quarter from mid-April through mid-May and from late September through October.

Other common migrants include short-distance migrants such as Swamp Sparrow and Winter Wren that don't winter as far away as warblers and vireos. Short-distance migrants appear earlier in the spring and later in the fall than other migrating birds.

Wintering

Many interesting birds winter near Queen's Creek thanks in part to the area's unique topography. The Blue-headed Vireo, which usually winters farther south, may be seen at here in the winter. The Red-breasted Nuthatch finds the tall pines and old hardwoods good places to forage and seeks shelter in them during the cold season. Above the marsh, Northern Harriers glide in search of prey among the dead grasses. Bald Eagles frequent New Quarter throughout the year. They are often seen perched on snags and tall trees while looking out at the river.

The most abundant winter birds are common throughout the area. The numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers and Golden-crowned Kinglets can be astounding. Other common species include the Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, Cedar Waxwing, and White-breasted Nuthatch, White-throated Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco.

Leave Your Data

Use the checklist provided to record the number of birds of each species that you see while visiting New Quarter Park. Please leave your list at the Park Office so that we may add your bird sightings and contact information (optional) to our database.

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Comments: _____

The Williamsburg Bird Club meets at New Quarter Park on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month. Visit www.wmbgbirdclub.com for information on start times and bird walk leaders.



For more information or to reserve New Quarter Park facilities for group events, call York County Parks and Recreation at 757-890-3500.

Bird Watching at New Quarter Park

The variety of birds at the park reflect its diverse habitats.

Tidal Wetlands

The Park is bounded to the west by Queen's Creek and to the east by Cub Dam Creek, both tidal tributaries of the York River, which is nested in Chesapeake Bay estuary. The creeks and marshy flats support a community of birds living in the grasses and trees adjacent to the creeks. Key species include Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Osprey, American Bald Eagle, Clapper Rail, and Seaside Sparrow.

Mature Hardwoods

White and Red Oaks, American Beech, and Tulip Poplar dominate the Queen's Creek uplands. The canopy nests Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Red-headed and Pileated Woodpeckers, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-throated and Red-eyed Vireos, and Scarlet and Summer Tanagers. Dense patches of mountain laurel attract Wood Thrush, Eastern Towhee, Kentucky Warbler, Ovenbird, and in winter Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Mature Swamp

Many Black Walnut trees border the Cub Dam Creek side of the park. One may see Wild Turkey, Eastern Screech Owl, Belted Kingfisher, wintering Hermit Thrushes and Fox Sparrows, and breeding Northern Parula.

Meadows

Open meadows along the park road are ideal for Eastern Bluebirds and Chipping Sparrows. Open areas are hunting sites for Cooper's and Red-tailed Hawks, and Barn Swallows which nest nearby.

Canada Goose	
Mute Swan	
Tundra Swan	
Wood Duck	
American Black Duck	
Mallard	
Canvasback	
Lesser Scaup	
Bufflehead	
Common Goldeneye	
Hooded Merganser	
Red-breasted Merganser	
Ruddy Duck	
Wild Turkey	
Common Loon	
Double-crested Cormorant	
American Bittern	
Great Blue Heron	
Great Egret	
Green Heron	
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	
Black Vulture	
Turkey Vulture	
Osprey	
Bald Eagle	
Northern Harrier	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	
Cooper's Hawk	
Red-shouldered Hawk	
Red-tailed Hawk	
American Kestrel	
Merlin	
Clapper Rail	
Virginia Rail	
Killdeer	
Greater Yellowlegs	
Spotted Sandpiper	
Wilson's Snipe	
American Woodcock	
Laughing Gull	
Ring-billed Gull	

Herring Gull	
Great Black-backed Gull	
Caspian Tern	
Royal Tern	
Common Tern	
Forster's Tern	
Mourning Dove	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	
Eastern Screech Owl	
Great Horned Owl	
Barred Owl	
Common Nighthawk	
Chuck-will's-widow	
Chimney Swift	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	
Belted Kingfisher	
Red-headed Woodpecker	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	
Downy Woodpecker	
Hairy Woodpecker	
Northern Flicker	
Pileated Woodpecker	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	
Acadian Flycatcher	
Eastern Phoebe	
Great Crested Flycatcher	
Eastern Kingbird	
White-eyed Vireo	
Yellow-throated Vireo	
Blue-headed Vireo	
Philadelphia Vireo	
Red-eyed Vireo	
Blue Jay	
American Crow	
Fish Crow	
Purple Martin	
Tree Swallow	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	
Bank Swallow	
Cliff Swallow	

Barn Swallow	
Carolina Chickadee	
Tufted Titmouse	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	
White-breasted Nuthatch	
Brown Creeper	
Carolina Wren	
House Wren	
Winter Wren	
Marsh Wren	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	
Eastern Bluebird	
Veery	
Gray-cheeked Thrush	
Swainson's Thrush	
Hermit Thrush	
Wood Thrush	
American Robin	
Gray Catbird	
Northern Mockingbird	
Brown Thrasher	
European Starling	
Cedar Waxwing	
Nashville Warbler	
Northern Parula	
Yellow Warbler	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	
Magnolia Warbler	
Cape May Warbler	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Black-throated Green Warbler	
Blackburnian Warbler	
Yellow-throated Warbler	
Pine Warbler	
Prairie Warbler	
Palm Warbler	
Bay-breasted Warbler	
Blackpoll Warbler	

Cerulean Warbler	
Black-and-white Warbler	
American Redstart	
Worm-eating Warbler	
Ovenbird	
Northern Waterthrush	
Louisiana Waterthrush	
Kentucky Warbler	
Common Yellowthroat	
Hooded Warbler	
Canada Warbler	
Summer Tanager	
Scarlet Tanager	
Eastern Towhee	
Chipping Sparrow	
Field Sparrow	
Salt Marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow	
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow	
Seaside Sparrow	
Fox Sparrow	
Song Sparrow	
Swamp Sparrow	
White-throated Sparrow	
Dark-eyed Junco	
Northern Cardinal	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	
Blue Grosbeak	
Indigo Bunting	
Bobolink	
Red-winged Blackbird	
Rusty Blackbird	
Common Grackle	
Brown-headed Cowbird	
Orchard Oriole	
Baltimore Oriole	
Purple Finch	
House Finch	
Pine Siskin	
American Goldfinch	
Evening Grosbeak	
House Sparrow	